

233941

REPORT MADE AT:

Leo J. Brennan

PLACE WHERE MADE:

Green Bay, Wis.

DATE WHEN MADE:

July 23, 1918!

PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE:

July 17, 1918

TITLE OF CASE AND OFFENSE CHARGED OR NATURE OF MATTER UNDER INVESTIGATION:

IN RE: ALFRED W. LAWSON

*D. Agnew**J. W.*

Alleged violation ESPIONAGE ACT as amended.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, EVIDENCE COLLECTED, NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED, PLACES VISITED, ETC.

At Green Bay, Wis.

This office is in receipt of the following letter from the Chief of the Bureau of Investigation, Dep't of Justice, initialled M. D. A. and dated July 12, 1918.

R. B. Spencer, Esq.,
Box #663,
Milwaukee, Wis.

Dear Sir:

I enclose herewith for your information and appropriate attention copy of a communication transmitted to me by the Military Intelligence concerning Alfred W. Lawson of the Lawson Aircraft Corporation, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Very truly yours,

A. B. Bielaski, Chief.

CONFIDENTIAL

Intelligence Officer, McCook Field, Dayton, Ohio.

Military Intelligence Branch, War Dept., Washington D. C.

Mr. Alfred W. Lawson.

1. The following report, which is transmitted to you verbatim, is forwarded for whatever action you may see fit to take. "I notice that Mr. Alfred W. Lawson of the Lawson Air Craft Corp. of Green Bay, Wis. has been allowed to go through and visit the various departments at McCook Field.

"I have accurate knowledge to the effect that Mr. Lawson, after a visit to McCook Field early this spring, made statements to the effect that our machines here were very poorly made; also numerous statements to citizens of Green Bay that the Liberty motor was, as he termed it, "a bunch of bunk" and press agent's stuff to cover up its failure. At that time, Mr. Lawson was building two airplanes for personal test purposes and on all orders that were sent out for material, he had stamped to the effect that "this material is for use on airplanes for the U. S. Government and must be the very best".

"Also during the fuelless days that were ordered by the Fuel Administration, his shop was run with only a few men laid off, but the entire office force working and the whole shop kept to the temperature of at least 70 degrees, or that used regularly. When I questioned him, stating that it was illegal for him to do this, he

IN RE: ALFRED W. LAWSON

Leo J. Brennan

July 17, 1918

Alleged violation Espionage Act
As amended.

stated that he had a permit from the Fuel Administration at Green Bay, authorizing him to runk as he was on Government work. This statement I believe to be untrue, as Mr. Rasmussen, then employed as fireman, said to me that no such order had come through and that he was very much worried because Mr. Lawson made it necessary for him to keep up the fires as usual. Mr. Lawson's excuse to me was also that the shop was closed down and that we were running as an office building, which was allowed to keep open on these fuelless Mondays. However, the law stated that the temperature in such office buildings should be kept just above the freezing point, which certainly was not adhered to in any manner by Mr. Lawson.

"Mr. Lawson had a sign on the doors of the factory, stating "this factory closed by order of the Fuel Administration," and in order to do away with evidence, the customary cards in the time clock were removed, which would show that no one punched in or out on these days.

"I believe Mr. Lawson should be denied the privilege of visiting any aircraft plant or field in the United States; also that the above statement regarding his action towards the Fuel Administration should be investigated and placed in the hands of the proper authorities.

"I would be glad to furnish names of witnesses corroborating the above statements."

2. It is also reported to us from another source that Mr. Lawson is compiling all the Aeronautical data he can get. "He makes notes of everything. He is a man that can not be trusted where money is concerned."

REED L. PARKER,
2nd Lt., A. S. Sig. R. C.
I. O.

Acting under instructions of Special Agent in Charge, Spencer, agent proceeded to investigate the facts in this case and reports his investigation as follows:

The articles of incorporation of the Lawson Aircraft Co., are filed in the office of the Register of Deeds for Brown County, Wisconsin, and are dated April 4th, 1917; the incorporators of this Company are George W. Ellis, William Hoberg and John P. Jessen, all of Green Bay, Wisconsin. Alfred W. Lawson's name does not appear in these articles. The powers of this corporation are the usual powers of such companies, including the right to purchase patents and patent rights in the United States and foreign countries. This

IN RE: ALFRED W. LAWSON
Alleged violation Espionage Act
as amended.

Lee J. Brennan. July 17, 1918.

concern filed amended articles of incorporation July 2nd, 1917, which were signed July 28, 1917. The same incorporators signed the articles and nowhere does the name of Alfred W. Lawson appear. Upon the amended articles the capitalization is increased to \$200,000. Stock was sold at less than parvalue, according to information secured from John A. Kittell, an attorney of Green Bay, Wisconsin, and Fuel Administrator^{ther}. The par value of the stock was fixed in the amended articles at \$100 per share. The sale of stock at less than par value is illegal under the statutes of this state. John A. Kittell has heard from a member of the Dunn trade reporting firm that Alfred W. Lawson has been through bankruptcy proceedings twice. In advertising matter that appeared in the Green Bay press Gazette when this company was selling stock the statement was made that an aeroplane of this concern had been inspected by a Government official of Washington, so John A. Kittell states that Mr. Kittell wrote authorities of Washington on this matter and was informed that no such person as that one mentioned in the advertisement had authority to inspect planes. John A. Kittell upon being interrogated as to whether he was aware that any permit to heat the factory building of this company had ever been issued replied that no permit had been issued by him; he, as Fuel Administrator, considered this company bound by the regulations of the Fuel Administration as he knew they were not engaged on government orders. Alfred W. Lawson is considered by John A. Kittell to be an inventive crank, a great talker, but harmless. He says that ~~is~~ is the general opinion of Lawson among the loyal citizens of Green Bay, Wisconsin. Kittell, while Lawson has not spoken directly to him, says further that Lawson may have criticized the Aircraft Construction Board but he believes that this attitude was taken by Lawson's failure to secure Government orders. He thinks the other members of the firm, that is the incorporators,

IN RE: ALFRED W. LAWSON
Alleged violation Espionage Act
as amended.

Leo J. Brennan. July, 1918.

loyal and trustworthy.

Dr. H. W. Baldwin, a member of the Local Board for the city of Green Bay was interrogated and gave the information that Alfred W. Lawson was a person who talked a great deal and was intensely interested in the aeroplane business. He thought Lawson's plane a good one for training purposes and had hearsay information to the effect that the government was interested in the planes of this company.

Eben A. Minahan, a prominent lawyer of Green Bay and local Chief of the A. F. L. was of the opinion that Lawson was a braggart who while probably well informed on aeroplane construction, was inclined to talk a great deal and whose financial status was not sound. He considers Lawson harmless and does not know of any German or other alien enemy connections that Lawson may have. The agent values Eben A. Minahan's opinion and believes his testimony absolutely disinterested. In this connection the agent points out that John A. Kittell has commenced legal actions for clients against the Lawson Aircraft Company. All the witnesses interrogated were of the opinion that Lawson had at one time been the editor of a periodical relating to aeroplane construction; they were not aware of the name or place of publication of this periodical, and that he had been in Green Bay a year or more, coming from New York City.

From the agent's investigation here he reaches the following conclusions, subject to change if further investigation develops any new phases to this assignment; that Alfred W. Lawson is an inventive crank who talks at random about his inventions and their superiority to other models and designs; that he is financially unsound; that he has not been wilful in his statements concerning the Liberty motor if he has in fact made such assertions, but that he

IN RE: ALFRED W. LAWSON
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as amended.

Leo J. Brennan. July 17, 19181

have been made with the spirit of a braggart; that no permit was issued from the office of the Fuel Administrator at Green Bay, Wisconsin to allow the factory building of the Lawson Aircraft Co., to be heated on the heatless days announced by the Fuel Administration; no reports of a violation of this order have been reported to John A. Kittell Fuel Administrator and the Military Intelligence Branch, War Dep't should notify the Fuel Administrator here the names of the witnesses to the alleged violation. The Lawson Aircraft Company have manufactured two planes according to statements of persons interrogated.

Further report will follow.

REPORT MADE BY:

W. A. Wiseman

PLACE WHERE MADE:

San Antonio, Tex.

DATE WHEN MADE:

10-12-18

PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE:

10-11-18

TITLE OF CASE AND OFFENSE CHARGED OR NATURE OF MATTER UNDER INVESTIGATION:

In Re: Alfredo W. Lawson,
Proposed Air-Craft Factory to Mexico

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, EVIDENCE COLLECTED, NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED, PLACES VISITED, ETC.

At San Antonio, Texas.

The following information has been received from the United States Postal Censorship, San Antonio, Texas.

Comment on censored letter from General Juan Rios, Chief Clerk Estado Mayor, Dept of War & Marine, Mexico D. F. to Alfredo W. Lawson, Green Bay, Wisconsin, dated September 25, 1918

Writer declines proposition as the Mexican government is not concerned at this time with the establishment of an air-craft factory.

Note: The nature of the proposition is not indicated

Copy of this report is being furnished to Chicago Division for appropriate attention.

August 12th, 1918.

R. B. Spencer, Esquire,
Box #663,
Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Dear Sir:-

Referring to my letter of July 12th, in regard to Alfred W. Lawson of Greenbay, Wisconsin, please advise me of the result of any investigation which you may have made on this case.

In making reports on this case, kindly refer to the initials R.B., and the War Department file number P.P. 14655-M.I.-4-56.

Very truly yours,

Chief.

233941

EXECUTIVE DIVISION
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BRANCH
In replying refer to

P.M. 14635
M.I. 4-36

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

August 10, 1918.

Mr. A. Bruce Bielski,
Chief, Bureau of Investigation,
Department of Justice,
Washington, D. C.

Alfred W.

My dear Mr. Bielski:

I hand you herewith, copy of Postal Censor report on censored letter from one Lawson, Greenbay, Wis., to Hon. Mayor, Puerto Plata, P.R.; also your file 233941.

I note that you asked for an investigation of this man on July 12th, in accordance with a request from me dated June 1st. May I ask that you request Special Agent Spencer to expedite this investigation?

Very sincerely,

M. Churchill,
Colonel, General Staff,
Chief, Military Intelligence Branch,
Executive Division.

By *J. C. Van Dusen*
G. C. Van Dusen,
1st. Lieut., U. S. N. A.

enc.
ijp

8-12-8

Nebraska
Wisconsin
Follow up.

NEW YORK, N. Y.

Index No. 75524

U. S. POSTAL CENSORSHIP

From
 Lawson,
 Greenbay, Wis

To
 Hon. Mayor
 Puerto Plata,
 R.D.

Postmark

Date of letter July 18th 1918
 Copied by C.T.

No. of Enclosures _____

Commentator No. 282/279 Branch Trade Date July 25th 1918 Language English

Original to: <u>ONI--MIB</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	<u>D. A. C.</u>	<u>A. C. LSC-per AAM</u>
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Writer encloses pamphlet showing construction of Lawson aircraft.

A.B.H.

DIVISION	DATE	COPIES	DISPOSITION AND SIGNATURE
W T B			
M I B	<u>7/29/18</u>	<u>5</u>	HTP-----Hold
ONI	<u>7/29/18</u>		To M.I.B. for disposition
CCC			
P O			
RX. AC	<u>7/29/18</u>		

THIS SLIP ALWAYS TO ACCOMPANY LETTER

EXECUTIVE DIVISION
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BRANCH

In replying refer to

PF-14635
M.I. 4-36.

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

June 21, 1918.

Mr. A. Bruce Bielaski,
Chief, Bureau of Investigation,
Department of Justice,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Bielaski:-

I hand you herewith carbon copy of letter received by this office from the Intelligence Officer, McCook Field, Dayton, Ohio in regard to one Alfred W. Lawson of the Lawson Aircraft Corporation.

If the activities of this man are such as a report would indicate, he needs looking after. I have no further data at hand.

Yours very truly,

M. Churchill,
Colonel, General Staff,
Chief, Military Intelligence Branch,
Executive Division.

By:

J. C. Van Dusen
G. C. Van Dusen,
Lieutenant, U. S. N. A.

1 encl.
amp.

investigated and placed in the hands of the proper authorities.

"I would be glad to furnish names of witnesses corroborating the above statements."

2. It is also reported to us from another source that Mr. Lawson is compiling all the pharmaceutical data he can get. "He makes notes of everything. He is a man that can not be trusted where money is concerned."

REND L. PARKER,
2nd Lt., A.S., SIE, R.C.
L. O.

MRA/RND

Washington, D. C.

July 12, 1918.

R. B. Spencer, Esq.,

Box #563,

Milwaukee, Wis.

Dear Sir:-

I enclose herewith for your information and appropriate attention copy of a communication transmitted to me by the Military Intelligence concerning Alfred W. Lawson of the Lawson Aircraft Corporation, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Very truly yours,

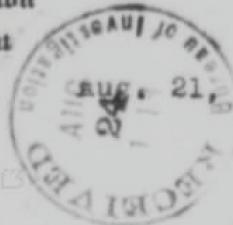
Chief.

R. E. Spencer.
SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE
ADDRESS BOX 659

310 FEDERAL BUILDING
TELEPHONE MAIN 4565

Y 233941

United States Department of Justice
Bureau of Investigation
Office of Special Agent
Milwaukee



A. B. Bielaski, Esq.,
Chief, Bureau of Investigation,
Department of Justice,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

In re: Alfred W. Lawson.
Alleged criticism McCook
Aviation Field, Dayton, Ohio.

Reference is made to your letter of the 12th
inst., initialed BB, War Department file number P.F.
14635-M.I.-4-36.

In reply reference is made to Special Agent
Brennan's report for July 17, 1918. Our record shows
that a copy of this report has been also forwarded to
the Military Intelligence Branch, War Department, Wash-
ington, D. C.

This would seem to close the investigation
unless you desire further information.

Very truly yours,

R. E. Spencer

Special Agent in Charge.

C/HGC